

Additional questions and answers, draft solicitation AB-133E-16-RQ-0581, NOAA Commercial Weather Data Pilot

1. Is NOAA requiring a minimum number of soundings per day in order to be eligible for award?
 - a. NOAA's goal is to perform a statistically significant operational assessment of the impact of commercial RO data on our numerical weather prediction models. In order to perform a rigorous assessment, NOAA requires a sufficient number of soundings, distributed around the globe, over a sufficiently extended period.
 - Regarding number of soundings, offerors must be able to provide soundings for each day included in the data production period; however, given that limited numbers of soundings may be available during this test period, there is no additional minimum threshold. In order to perform an operational assessment of the impact of data on numerical weather prediction models, NOAA requires a minimum of 500 soundings per day from a provider. NOAA will perform a data quality assessment with a minimum of 250 soundings per day from a provider. For any provision of less than 250 soundings per day from a provider, NOAA will perform a partial data quality assessment as the number of soundings allows.
 - NOAA understands that current constellations may not be fully distributed; therefore no minimum distribution is required. However, within the requirement for "consecutive data", data from consecutive orbits over the period of data delivery is preferred.
 - Regarding the period of data delivery, NOAA has set a minimum requirement of three months of consecutive data.
 - b. Number of soundings may be used to evaluate overall quality of data as part of the technical evaluation, and offerors may receive higher technical ratings for providing 250 or 500 soundings per day.
2. What will the pricing model be for the final solicitation and award?
 - a. Award will be made on a firm-fixed price basis for a minimum total number of soundings to be determined by the offeror. Offerors will be required to offer and commit to a guaranteed minimum number of soundings to be included in the firm-fixed price.
 - b. Offerors must be able to provide soundings for each day included in the data production period; however, there are no additional minimum thresholds. Guaranteed minimums will be incorporated into any resulting contract(s) based on offerors' proposals.
3. In the evaluation section, what does "proposed prices will be evaluated but not scored" mean, and what role does price play in the award decision?
 - a. In accordance with FAR 12.209 and 13.106-3, pricing will be evaluated to determine whether it is fair and reasonable. However, no score or other rating is given to each offeror's price. When determining best value to the Government, technical specifications and price are approximately equal.
4. Do the questions in the evaluation instructions constitute minimum requirements for the proposed data?

- a. Only specifications in the Statement of Need are requirements that must be met in order to be eligible for award. Any additional information provided by offerors, including responses to the questions in the evaluation instructions, may be used to evaluate the overall quality of the data during the technical evaluation process. Offerors may receive a higher technical rating for exceeding minimum specifications.

The final solicitation is anticipated on or around August 1 and will allow for additional questions and answers during the proposal preparation timeframe. However, vendors may contact Sarah Waugh (sarah.waugh@noaa.gov) with any questions or concerns prior to the final solicitation.